

What is Claimed is:

1. A method of filtering the flow of blood between an atrium and a left atrial appendage of a patient comprising:

5 providing a filtering membrane having a permeable structure which allows blood to flow through the filtering membrane but substantially inhibits thrombus from passing therethrough, and a support structure attached to the filtering membrane configured to permanently engage a portion of an ostium and an
10 interior wall of the left atrial appendage;

positioning the filtering membrane across the ostium by permanently engaging the portion of the interior wall of the left atrial appendage with the support structure; and

15 filtering blood flow through the ostium with the filtering membrane such that blood may flow through the filtering membrane while thrombus is substantially inhibited from passing therethrough.

2. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the support structure comprises a centering structure extending from the filtering membrane, and

5 wherein the positioning the filtering membrane comprises centering the filtering membrane over the ostium by passing the centering structure into the ostium.

3. The method as defined in claim 1, wherein the support structure comprises an anchor structure and a tether extending between the anchor structure and the filtering membrane, and

5 wherein positioning the filtering
membrane further comprises piercing the wall of the
left atrial appendage with the anchor structure.

4. The method as defined in claim 1,
wherein the support structure comprises an expandable
structure, and

 wherein the positioning the filtering
5 membrane further comprises expanding the expandable
structure to engage an interior wall of the left atrial
appendage.

5. The method as defined in claim 1,
wherein the support structure comprises a substantially
cylindrical configuration, and

 wherein the positioning the filtering
5 membrane further comprises expanding the support
structure to engage the interior wall of the left
atrial appendage.

6. The method as defined in claim 5,
further comprising:

 providing an expandable structure which
is positioned within the support structure and which
5 radially expands the support structure, and

 wherein the positioning the filtering
membrane further comprises expanding the expandable
structure, thereby expanding the support structure.

7. The method as defined in claim 6,
wherein the filtering membrane defines an opening
therethrough, the method further comprising:

 after expanding the support structure to
5 engage the interior wall of the left atrial appendage,

removing the expandable structure through the opening in the filtering membrane.